

Light Insight

The Right Man For The Job

“Moses said to Aaron, ‘Come near the altar...’ ” (Leviticus 9:7)

Bungee-jumping, hang-gliding free-fall parachuting, and riding over Niagara falls in a beer barrel all share one thing. You have to be absolutely *meshuga* to do them.

There’s a big difference between being fearless and being foolhardy.

However there are times when being afraid is an advantage. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Hacoen once decided that a particular student should take a vacant post as the Rabbi in a distant community. The student was reluctant to go. He told Rabbi Yisrael Meir he was afraid of the responsibility of being the only Jewish authority for a whole community. Rabbi Yisrael Meir replied, “Should I send someone who’s not afraid?”

Sometimes being afraid doesn’t disqualify someone from being the right man or woman for the job. Sometimes it’s the essential quality.

Moses had to tell Aaron, “Come near the altar.” Rashi explains that Aaron was embarrassed and afraid to approach the altar. Moses told him not to be afraid, for it was precisely Aaron’s quality of bashfulness which qualified him to be the High Priest.

When we want to draw close to G-d, to serve Him with more conviction and faithfulness, we might feel embarrassed by our inadequacies, afraid and incapable of such a task. “Who am I to approach G-d?” we might think. It is precisely that quality of self-effacement, of fear, which is the prerequisite for being “the right man for the job.”

Good Advice

*“And the sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, each man took his fire-pan.”
(Leviticus 10:1)*

Nadav and Avihu made an error in judgment. They thought it was not only the High Priest who could bring the incense offering in the Holy of Holies, but that even they were permitted to do so. In fact, they were incorrect, and when they proceeded to bring the incense offering themselves, they were

punished mortally.

They were great tzaddikim and no doubt pondered their conclusion before committing themselves to action. How did they come to make such an error?

The Midrash comments on the above verse: “‘Each man his fire-pan’; each man by himself, without taking advice one from the other.” The implication is that if they had taken advice from one another, if they had talked it over before they acted, they would not have erred.

Even if they had discussed it, why should they have arrived at a different conclusion? Since they both did the same thing — they both brought the same improper incense offering — it must be that they were both of the same opinion, that a non-High Priest was permitted to offer the incense. So even if they had consulted with each other, wouldn’t they have still come to the same conclusion?

Such is the power of counsel. Even though two people may share an identical opinion, through discussion and mutual counsel they can arrive at the truth — which may be 180° from what they both previously believed.

Response Line

It Would Have Been Enough?

Nomi Levy wrote:

Hi! We are some students from the San Diego Hebrew Day School. We are currently researching some things for a Haggadah we are working on in school, we have some questions and would like you to answer them for us.

In "Dayenu" it states:

- 1. Had He split the sea for us, and not carried us through it in dryness, it would have been enough.*
- 2. Had He carried us through it in dryness, and not drowned our opponents in it, it would have been enough.*
- 3. Had He drowned our opponents in it, and not provided our needs in the desert for 40 years, it would have been enough.*

Yet it wouldn't have been enough because:

- 1. Not carrying us in dryness would have drowned us or slowed us.*
- 2. Had He not drowned our opponents they would have killed us.*
- 3. Had He not filled our needs in the desert we would have not survived.*

INSIGHTS into the HAGGADAH

The essential goal of the Pesach Seder is to communicate the story of the going out of Egypt. The following is a compilation of insights on the Haggadah. We hope they will enrich your Pesach Seder.

"Passover"

The Torah calls Passover, "*Chag HaMatzot*." But we call it "Passover." Why is this so? Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin explains as follows: The word Matzot and the word Mitzvot are spelled exactly the same in Hebrew. Thus "*Chag HaMatzot*" can be read "*Chag HaMitzvot*," meaning that by leaving Egypt and receiving the Torah, the Jewish People now have the opportunity to earn great reward by doing the Mitzvot.

"Passover", on the other hand, means to passover: G-d passed over the houses of the Jewish People. By calling it

Dear Students,

I hope I don't get in trouble for doing your homework for you, but here are some answers to the excellent questions you have posed.

Basically, G-d has many ways of achieving any goal, and is not limited to any one specific course of action. For example:

1. Had the sea floor not been totally dry, it would have been enough. We could have escaped from the Egyptians even if our shoes had gotten a bit muddy.

2. Had the Egyptians not drowned, it would have been enough. They could have (and should have!) run away in terror at the sight of the sea opening up for the Jewish People! Their 'courage' in pursuing the Jewish People to the ocean's core was actually the greatest of all miracles. It showed G-d's mastery over nature's every nuance, even over the hearts and minds of thousands of individual soldiers.

3. Had G-d not supplied us with *Manna* from Heaven and water from a rock, it would have been enough. We had cattle to supply us with milk and meat, and enough money to buy food and water from the communities bordering the desert. As it was, the Jewish People engaged in trade with the neighboring nations during the 40 years in the desert, buying food and clothing.

Good luck on your project!

Passover, we emphasize the good that G-d has done for us. Our Sages teach us not to serve G-d with an eye on the reward that we hope ultimately to receive; rather we should serve Him out of a sense of love and gratitude. By calling it Passover we de-emphasize the reward that each Mitzvah brings, and instead focus on the good that G-d has done for us.

Karpas

The Talmud explains that by beginning the Seder meal in an unusual way, with a vegetable instead of with bread, the children will be curious and ask, "Why are we beginning the meal with a vegetable instead of bread?" Once their curiosity is aroused, they will be more attentive to the story of the Exodus. Why a vegetable? Just as a vegetable serves as an appetizer, so too the unusual things we do this evening are meant to whet the children's curiosity.